



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 13, 2006

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## ***Rural Business Symposium Held In Halstead***

### **USDA Rural Development Funding Information Presented**

**Halstead, KS** – Business and community leaders from area counties attended the annual Rural Business Symposium in Halstead today. USDA Rural Development staff presented program information, which also included a conference keynote address by the Agency's State Director Chuck Banks.

State Director Banks, in his comments to the Symposium attendees, remarked, "USDA Rural Development programs can provide financial assistance to businesses, communities and agricultural producers to enhance economic development opportunities for Kansas. Further, with the inclusion of the Agency's '*Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Program*' in the 2002 Farm Bill, federal funding is available for eligible Kansans to establish new renewable energy systems or improve the efficiency of current energy systems."

At the conclusion of the Symposium, Harvey County Economic Development Director Mickey Fornaro-Dean, commented, "USDA Rural Development programs and staff can provide a great help to communities and businesses. We appreciate the Agency's participation in the Symposium." The Symposium was sponsored by the Halstead Chamber of Commerce, Harvey County Economic Development Council and Westar Energy.

During the Symposium, Banks further remarked, "It is especially important that we expand renewable energy projects and improve the efficiency of current systems as we strive to make the United States more energy independent, in addition to making protecting the economic security of our Nation. USDA Rural Development is playing an active role in helping America meet this important national security and economic development goal." USDA Rural Development's '*Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Program*' was established under the 2002 Farm Bill to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, along with supporting economic growth in rural America. Since the creation of this Program, the Agency has provided financial and technical assistance to numerous Kansas businesses and agricultural producers across the State.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life of rural Americans. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, energy programs, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development's programs, log onto the Agency's Kansas website at: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks) or call the Agency's state office at 785-271-2700.